This story is based on a 14 year old boy whose name is Shawn. Shawn has sever cerebral palsy. Shawn is confined to a wheelchair has no muscle control; he can not speak, and suffers from seizures daily. Shawn can barely make his eyes focus; they have a mind of their own. Shawn drools and when eating he has to wait for his swallowing reflexes to kick in which he says might take awhile. This story is written from Shawn’s point of view, his thoughts.

Shawn’s story takes place in Washington State. He has a brother names Paul and a sister named Cindy, which are older than him. His dads name is Daniel who is a Pulitzer Prize winner for writing a poem about Shawn. Daniel loves Shawn but struggles with his condition, he feels Shawn is suffering. Shawn’s mom lindy is a stay at home mom, she adores Shawn but treats him more like a baby than an 14 year old boy.

Shawn describes himself how people would describe him as retarded, a vegetable, then he describes himself in his own way, a genius, smart, understands everything people say to him, remembers every word he has ever heard since the age of four. Shawn describes himself as a typical 14 year old boy. He has needs and wants. Shawn is attracted to his sister’s friend, he realizes for the first time he loves someone in a different way than he loves his mom.

Shawn goes to a school, a special education classroom in a regular high school he refers to himself as the lowest person in his class but the most intelligent. Shawn’s father seems to be the only one in the family that is taking Shawn’s condition very hard. Daniel moved out of the home when Shawn was four, he feels Shawn is suffering from his seizures and contemplates ending Shawn’s suffering. On the other hand Shawn enjoys his seizures he has an out of body experience where he can walk, talk, and be normal.

At the end of the story Shawn struggles with the idea his father might end his life. Shawn wants to stay in this world, he may be different but he is not suffering. Shawn would just like to be able to speak and express what he is thinking, he wants to let them know he is fully alive, not a vegetable, a smart boy that understands the world around him.

I loved stuck in neutral it really had me thinking what if? What if this is the way people with cerebral palsy think and feel. This story describes how people look at someone with cerebral palsy, a vegetable, brain dead, and unfortunately referred to as retarded.

The author did a good job describing Shawn as a cerebral palsy child, everything Shawn was going through made it so real. Shawn’s mother speaks to him as If he was 18 months old; she dressed him in clothes that made him stand out. Paul Shawn’s brother fed him chips, defended him from others. Cindy his sister taught him the alphabet and sounds not knowing he was actually learning.

This story really puts you in the life of a family who has someone with cerebral palsy. I don’t feel Shawn was portrayed in a negative way in the story. He was portrayed in a way to open your eyes, your mind, and your heart. A touching part of this story was reading the authors notes, where he himself has a son with cerebral palsy he writes. “Does he like potatoes chips and rock and roll? Is he happy to be alive? I can’t say yes and I can’t say no, all anybody can honestly say is I don’t know none of us really know”. Terry Truman.

The author’s statement holds truth. We really don’t know how anybody feels disability or not. This story was a real eye opener for me. It made me think about the struggles people with cerebral palsy endure and the struggles of the families as well.